

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3 IMPDET

TAGS: PFOR, SP, IS, XF

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND THE MIDDLE EAST -- CALL ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
UNDER SECRETARY SOLANO

REFS: STATE 58830, STATE 60529, STATE 60605, MADRID 2084

1. FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA RETURNED WITH THE KING FROM EGYPT AND JORDAN ON MARCH 26 BUT DEPARTED FOR PARIS ON MARCH 27 TO MEET WITH A MEXICAN REPRESENTATIVE ON RENEWAL OF RELATIONS WITH MEXICO. HE RETURNED AGAIN ON THE 28TH BUT WILL DEPART ON APRIL 2 FOR A FOUR-DAY TRIP TO SENEGAL. IN THE INTERVENING FEW DAYS THIS WEEK HE HAS TO DEAL WITH A VISIT BY THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER, A MEETING OF THE CORTES, AND A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING. THEREFORE, HE ASKED ME TO MEET WITH UNDER SECRETARY SOLANO RATHER THAN HIMSELF. I DID THIS ON MARCH 30.

2. I FIRST BRIEFED SOLANO ON SECRETARY VANCE'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP AND PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES ON THE BASIS OF THE MATERIAL PROVIDED IN STATE 60529 AND 60605. SOLANO LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION, SAID HE WOULD INFORM OREJA, AND THEN PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS FROM THE TRIP THE KING AND OREJA MADE TO EGYPT AND JORDAN THE WEEK OF MARCH 19 - 26. HE SAID

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THEY FOUND BOTH SADAT AND HUSSEIN DESIROUS FOR PEACE. SADAT SEEMED TO FEEL VERY STRONGLY ABOUT THIS AND TO WANT TO ACHIEVE THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO THIS END. HE WAS NOT NOW PRESSING THE IDEA OF A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING. A FURTHER HOPEFUL NOTE WAS THAT OREJA FOUND PLO REPRESENTATIVE QADDUMI, WITH WHOM HE MET (HE DID NOT MEET WITH ARAFAT), TAKING A SOMEWHAT "MODERATE" LINE. HOWEVER, AT THE SAME

TIME THE ARAB LEADERS TOLD THE SPANISH THEY FOUND THE ISRAELI POSITION TO BE VERY RIGID. (HERE SOLANO COMMENTED THAT ONE COULD NOT EXPECT ANYTHING ELSE JUST BEFORE ISRAELI ELECTIONS.) MOREOVER, THE ISSUES WERE VERY COMPLICATED, THE ARABS WERE CHARACTERISTICALLY EMOTIONAL, AND THEY PUT GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. SOLANO FURTHER SAID THAT THE ARAB LEADERS APPEARED TO CONSIDER THE US ROLE TO BE DECISIVE, BUT INDICATED THEY WERE NOT QUITE SURE YET HOW TO JUDGE THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION.

3. AFTER THE ABOVE EXCHANGE, I ASKED SOLANO THE CURRENT SPANISH POSITION WITH REGARD TO ISRAEL, NOTING THAT UNDER THE KING'S FIRST GOVERNMENT THERE HAD SEEMED TO BE A GREATER OPENNESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL THAN NOW. SOLANO SAID THAT THE CHANGE WAS MORE ONE OF NUANCE THAN SUBSTANCE. SPAIN HAD NOTHING AGAINST ISRAEL AND LOOKED FORWARD TO NORMALIZATION AT A PROPITIOUS TIME. IT RECOGNIZED THAT SPAIN DID NOT HAVE GREAT WEIGHT IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE REGION BUT IT WOULD PREFER TO RESERVE ITS MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION UNTIL THAT MOVE MIGHT HAVE SOME POSITIVE EFFECT TOWARD RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE NEAR EAST. I USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT MY INSTRUCTIONS BY SAYING WE BELIEVED THAT ISRAEL HAD A FEELING OF ISOLATION AND THAT THUS A MOVE BY SPAIN TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL COULD MAKE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ATMOSPHERE FOR PEACE. SOLANO THEN SAID THAT THERE WAS ALSO AN ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE THAT HELD SPAIN BACK. THIS ISSUE CONCERNED THE OCCUPATION OF TERRITORY BY FORCE. IT RELATED TO SPAIN'S SITUATION IN GIBRALTAR WHERE SPAIN
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HELD THAT GREAT BRITAIN, ASIDE FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY OF UTRECHT, OCCUPIED A PORTION OF THE GIBRALTAR TERRITORY BY FORCE. BECAUSE OF THIS PRINCIPLE IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR SPAIN TO MAKE A MOVE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL BEFORE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AS PRESCRIBED IN UN RESOLUTIONS FROM THE TERRITORIES THAT IT HAD OCCUPIED. NEVERTHELESS, SPAIN LOOK FORWARD TO A TIME WHEN IT COULD MAKE A HELPFUL MOVE TOWARD RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL.

4. COMMENT: WHAT UNDERSECRETARY SOLANO DID NOT SAY WAS THAT ONE OF THE CENTRAL FOREIGN POLICY THEMES OF THE PRESENT SPANISH GOVERNMENT IS THE STRENGTHENING OF ITS RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES, AND THAT SPAIN HAS AN IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL INTEREST IN TERMS OF LARGE LOANS IT HOPES TO OBTAIN, AS WELL AS A LONGER-TERM POLITICAL INTEREST, IN ACCOMPLISHING THIS OBJECTIVE. IN ADDITION, SOLANO DID NOT MENTION ANOTHER POINT THAT OREJA HAS MADE TO THE PRESS IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS REGARDING RELATIONS WITH

ISRAEL, WHICH IS SPAIN'S BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIOR
RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINE PEOPLE. THUS,
ALTHOUGH SOLANO PROVIDED AN OPENING FOR US TO RETURN TO THE QUES-
TION OF SPANISH RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THIS
SPANISH GOVERNMENT GIVES CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE OF BEING
DISINCLINED TO MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BEFORE
SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD AN ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT. EATON

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